

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 HA-05

NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 MCT-01 /071 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3425

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 2733

E.O. N/A

TAGS: SHUM, PINT, PA

SUBJECT: ARREST OF DOMINGO LAINO

1. LAINO IS STILL HELD INCOMMUNICADO AS OF THIS EVENING, JULY 9.
THE RADICAL LIBERAL PARTY LEADER HAS NOT BEEN SEEN SINCE HIS GANGLAND-

STYLE ARREST JULY 7 AT 12 NOON. THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS BELIEVE THE
POLICE MUST HAVE TORTURED HIM AS LAINO'S COMPANION, FRANCISCO JOSE
DE VARGAS, WHILE STILL UNDER DETENTION, HAS BEEN SEEN BY HIS WIFE AND
PERMITTED TO RECEIVE FOOD AND CLOTHING. THE SUPREME COURT HAS
NOT YET RESPONDED TO HABEAS CORPUS PLEAS FILED BY LAWYERS JULY 8.

2. THE LAINO CASE IS THE EXCLUSIVE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION IN
POLITICAL CIRCLES HERE. THE NEWSPAPERS CONTINUE TO GIVE IT EX-
TENSIVE COVERAGE INCLUDING THE CONDEMNATIONS OF ALL OPPOSITION
POLITICAL PARTIES. WASHINGTON DATELINED STORIES HAVE APPEARED RE-
PORTING THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS ASKED THE GOP FOR INFORMATION
ON THE CASE, THAT WOLA HAS CONDEMNED THE GOVERNMENT FOR ITS ACTION,
AND THAT THE IAHRC HAS REQUESTED LAINO'S RELEASE POINTING OUT THAT
HIS ARREST IS IN VIOLATION OF THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION
ON PARAGUAY. THE RADIO STATION CONTROLLED BY THE RULING COLORADO
PARTY INTERRUPTS ITS PROGRAMMING PERIODICALLY TO ATTACK LAINO, DE VAR
GAS

(A LAWYER FOR THE INTER-FAITH COMMITTEE), CARMEN LARA DE CASTRO

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(PRESIDENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS ASSOCIATION OF PARAGUAY) AND THE
U.S. AMBASSADOR AS CRYPTO-COMMUNISTS. THE STATION ALSO ACCUSES
THE AMBASSADOR OF INTERFERING IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF PARAGUAY
BECAUSE OF HIS MESSAGE RELAYING THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN
TO THE GOP REGARDING LAINO'S WELLBEING AND HIS EXPRESSION OF
SYMPATHY TO THE FAMILY.

3. UNTIL SUNDAY MORNING THE ONLY GOVERNMENT VOICE TO BREAK SILENCE WAS THE HARDLINING EDITOR OF THE COLORADO PARTY NEWSPAPER WHO INSISTED LAINO WOULD BE TRIED ON A 1974 POLITICAL CONSPIRACY CHARGE. HE CHARACTERIZED LAINO'S ARREST AS A "ROUTINE MATTER." BUT THIS HAS CHANGED DRAMATICALLY WITH A HARSH EDITORIAL CONDEMNING LAINO'S ARREST IN THE JULY 9 EDITION OF HOY, A NEWSPAPER OWNED BY THE PRESIDENT'S SON-IN-LAW AND FREQUENTLY USED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO SIGNAL

POLICY DIRECTIONS. THE EDITORIAL ATTACKS THE LAINO ARREST AS TYPICAL OF TERRORIST KIDNAPPINGS AND POINTS OUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF AN ILLEGAL ACTION "CARRIED OUT AT NOON AND NOT CLARIFIED UNTIL MIDNIGHT."

THE EDITORIAL CHARGES THAT THE KIDNAPPING TOTOTALLY CONTRADICTS THE ARGUMENTS MADE BY THE PARAGUAYAN DELEGATION TO THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND ITS ATTEMPTS TO REFUTE THE IAHRC REPORT ON PARAGUAY.

4. COMMENT: IT IS NOW PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS DIVIDDED OVER HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF THE BAD SITUATION IN WHICH IT FINDS ITSELF. IF LAINO IS IN REASONABLY GOOD HEALTH THE GOVERNMENT MAY RELEASE HIM QUICKLY. IF HE IS SEVERELY BATTERED THEY MAY DELAY. WE WILL LEARN MORE TOMORROW.

WHITE

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